

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks..

Independent Claim 15, and Claims 2-9 which ultimately depend therefrom, were indicated allowable in the Official Action. These claim have not been amended and therefore clearly remain allowable.

Before discussing the subject matter recited in the remaining claims of this application, the following general overview is provided of features and operational characteristics associated with a method for manufacturing a USB electronic key according to at least one embodiment described and illustrated in the present application. In particular, methods disclosed in the application involve manufacturing the USB electronic key from a dielectric backing film or insulating substrate which carries a microcircuit 56. The microcircuit 56 defines USB-format contact pads and carries an electronic component connected to the pads.

As is evident from a study of Figs. 7 through 11 of the application and the associated description, various exemplary methods involve disposing at least the contact pads in a cavity in a bottom half shell 66 of a casing. As is also evident from these figures, a top half shell 67 is disposed to cover only one side of the bottom half shell 66 opposite a side at which the contact pads are disposed. Of course, the claimed invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments.

Turning now to the Official Action, independent Claims 16 and 26 are again rejected as being unpatentable based on a combination of the disclosures in the previously cited Yen and Tetaka patents. Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claim amendments render

the methods recited therein clearly distinguishable from the disclosures in Yen and Tetaka.

In particular, Claims 16 and 26 are amended to recite that the increasing of the thickness of the dielectric backing film of Claim 16, or the insulating substrate of Claim 26, including the microcircuit at least in the area of the contact pads of the microcircuit, so as to have a thickness that conforms to the USB Standard, includes disposing at least the contact pads in a cavity of a casing.

By contrast, in Yen, contact pads are not disposed in a cavity of base 113 or 114 (see Figs. 6 and 11 of Yen). Indeed, to the extent the base 113 of Yen's Fig. 11 embodiment can be said to include a cavity, at most, the circuit components 202a, but not the contacts 111, are disposed therein. Moreover, Tetaka, which was relied on concerning a cutting step, clearly does not cure this deficiency in Yen.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the methods recited in independent Claims 16 and 26, as presently amended, are clearly patentably distinguishable over the disclosures in Yen and Tetaka. Withdrawal of the rejections of those claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants also submit that the method recited in new independent Claim 27, which includes disposing a bottom-half shell and a top-half shell at a dielectric backing film or insulating substrate such that the bottom-half shell is below the dielectric backing film or insulating substrate and the top-half shell is above the dielectric backing film or insulating substrate, to thereby increase the thickness of the dielectric backing film or insulating substrate at least in the area of the contact pads of the microcircuit, wherein the top-half shell covers only one side of the bottom-half shell opposite a side at which the contact pads are disposed, is also patentably

distinguishable over the disclosures in Yen and Tetaka. For example, it is evident from Yen's Figs. 6 and 11 that element 114 not only has a portion which covers the side of the element 113 opposite a side at which the contacts 111 are disposed, but also includes a portion (arms 112) that covers a portion of element 114 that is on the same side as the side at which the contacts 111 are disposed. Thus, it cannot be said that Yen's element 114 covers only one side of the element 113 opposite a side at which the contacts 111 are disposed. Moreover, Tetaka does not cure this deficiency in Yen. New independent Claim 27 is therefore also clearly patentably distinguishable over the disclosures in Yen and Tetaka.

The dependent claims define additional distinguishing aspects associated with the present invention. These claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims and for reciting additional patentably distinguishing subject matter. For example, Claim 18, as presently amended, recites that the cavity is provided in a bottom half-shell of the casing, and that the method further includes interfitting the bottom half-shell with a top half-shell to thereby cover the bottom-half shell only on a side opposite a side of the bottom-half shell which contains the contact pads.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16, 1.17 and 1.20(d) and 1.21 that may be required by this paper, and to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

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